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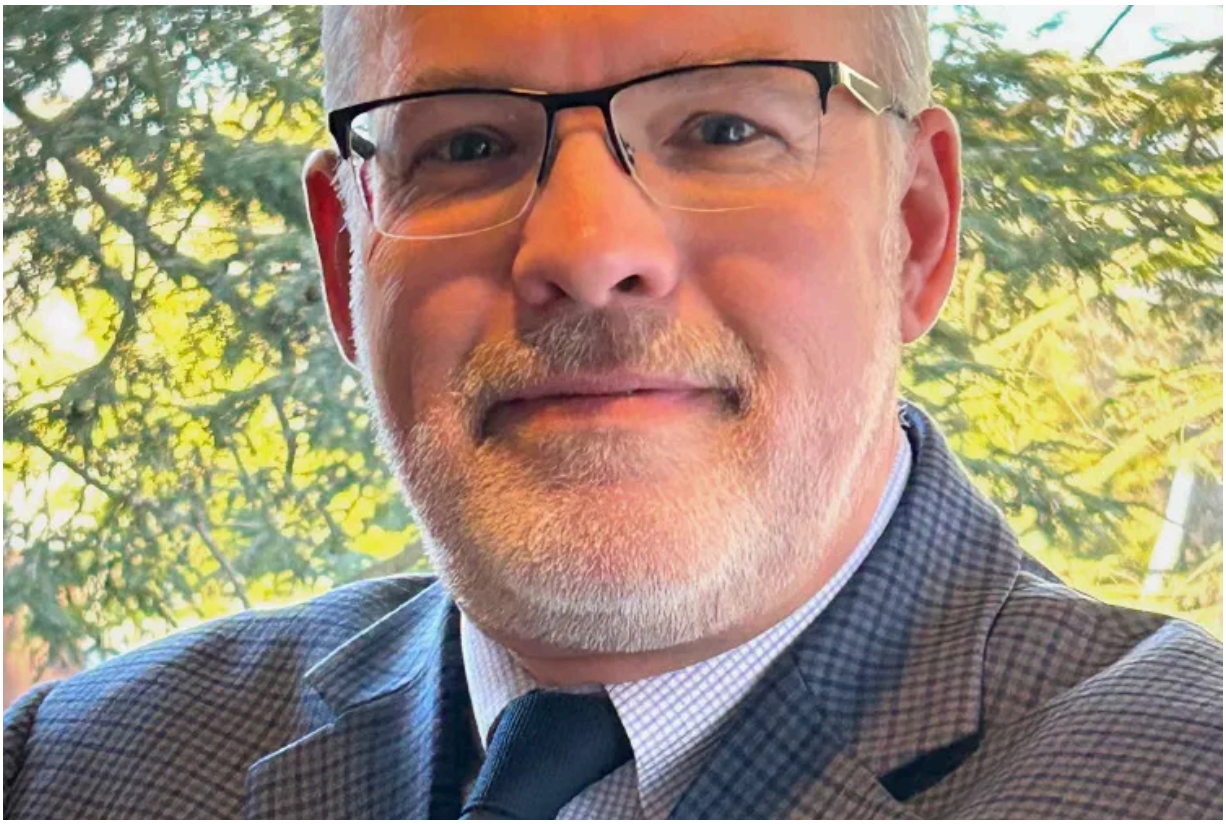
2025 ELECTIONS

For School Committe: Christian (Chris) Nixon

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

January 1, 2024 . 4:15 PM — 4 min read



Christian Nixon. COURTESY PHOTO

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- School Committee-Specific Questions

How many years have you lived in Winchester? 26 years

Please describe your professional background and education. I hold two architecture degrees from Rice University and an education policy fellowship from Northeastern University, Institute for Educational Leadership. I oversee budgeting, design and construction of capital projects for a nearby community and school district and have over 25 years of experience in programming, design and project delivery in K-12 education and healthcare.

What Winchester town positions have you held, and for how long?

- **Town Meeting:** 2008-present
- **School Committee:** 2010-present
- **EFPBC:** 2010-2014, 2021-present, Vice Chair
- **Capital Planning Committee:** 2014-2018, 2019-present
- **Audit Advisory Committee:** 2012-present
- **McCall Expansion Project Working Group**
- **WPS Facilities Master Plan Working Group**

What are the primary issues motivating your candidacy?
Out of the gate, my top priorities are:

- Making the case for WPS' true FY26 funding needs following our scheduled March 20th vote on the recommended budget.
- Supporting the State of the Town's goals towards sustainable revenue models to meet the long-term needs of Winchester and the district.
- Completing and submitting the "New Muraco" Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority.
- Completing Phase II of the district's 10-Year Facilities Master P

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- In collaboration with the Superintendent, addressing WEA concerns over culture, communication & PD.
- Constructively negotiating another three-year collective-bargaining agreement with the units of the Winchester Education Association.
- Securing funding for Lincoln Elementary School's much-needed improvements (new HVAC systems & crumbling sitework/flatwork).

Can you share any volunteer work or civic engagement experiences that have shaped your perspective and prepared you for this role? My perspective as a parent of two kids who grew up in the district and a third with a few years left helps me understand students' PK-12 growth over a period of time that has included changes in district leadership, structures, and instructional practices. My experience on the School Committee and other key boards or committees affords me a unique appreciation for how "Winchester works"—and how it doesn't. Understanding basic duties, decisions, and "lanes" of the School Committee are an essential element of high-functioning government. A similar understanding of the workings of other Winchester public bodies means a better chance at collaboration and coordination on major shared initiatives, investments, and change.

How would you like voters to contact you if they have questions or want to discuss your platform further?

- **Email:** nixon01890@gmail.com
- **Twitter/X:** @bricknix

School Committee-Specific Questions

Given the FY2025 budget discussions, what measures would you propose to manage the budget effectively while protecting educational quality? This is a great question, especially this spring. The FY25 budget was voted ten months ago by Town Meeting and is funding operations this year. Subsequently, the district saw increases in a number of out-of-district

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tuitions and a 35% increase in special education transportation costs to the SEEM Collaborative, of which Winchester is a member district. Significant increases that were both unbudgeted and unanticipated, the School Committee voted last month to approve an encumbrance of over $360,000 from the Special Education Reserve Fund to cover these costs, protecting funding for the balance of the FY25 budget.

This was the first time the School Committee has drawn on this interest-bearing reserve fund, which was established by 2018 Town Meeting and requires a concurring vote of the Select Board for transfers (a "check and balance" system). In a very real way, it was Spring Town Meeting seven years ago on the request of the School Committee that approved the establishment of the SPED Reserve Fund (MGL Ch40, Sec 13E) as a measure to help manage our budgets effectively while protecting educational quality, and it was today's School Committee that was able to leverage the fund to do just that!

What is your stance on updating the current curriculum, particularly regarding literacy and math, and how would you implement these changes? I'm ready to embrace and support change to our curriculum—including necessary funding—but importantly, the School Committee needs to be sure the voices of our teachers and specialists are being heard. Surveys have pointed to a perception that it hasn't been okay to ask for resources or change that come with a cost. It doesn't help that 15 years ago teachers were accepting .25% COLAs with enrollment going through the roof. Extended periods of belt-tightening may have bent perceptions of "practice" into "policy." Changes in curriculum with supporting instructional materials and professional development come at a significant cost. It's essential that changes are carefully and thoughtfully developed, along with the case for funding, so that those outside our meetings, including FinCom and Town Meeting, are supportive partners.

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If Winchester had to reduce the School budget, which program would you definitely keep and which ones would you cut? (Highest and lowest priority) School Committee members have no such authority. Individually, we have opinions, but our authority exists only collectively as a committee, and we would always want a recommendation from the Superintendent. It's actually Town Meeting that sets and adjusts the school budget on recommendations from the Finance Committee, Town Manager, and School Committee. If we suddenly found ourselves over the summer facing a significant unbudgeted mandated cost increase without a funding source, my first recommendation would be a soft-freeze on consumables and discretionary service contracts, keeping all personnel and instructional tools in place.

Long before any cuts were made, I would lobby for a Fall Town Meeting—or Special Town Meeting—budget adjustment. This has happened before: In September of 2007, a Special Town Meeting was called to address a six-figure budget shortfall due to a number of unforeseen factors that impacted the district following the spring 2007 budget vote. After an uncomfortable debate, the district got its funding.

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2025 ELECTIONS

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Write-in votes, Winchester election results now final

Election 2025 is now over. The results from the March 22 townwide elections have been certified by the Town Clerk's office. Town Clerk MaryEllen Marshall released the final numbers March 27, with 17.3% of Winchester residents casting a vote in the election, or 2,951 votes, out of

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER
March 27, 2025

Newcomers win spots on Winchester Select Board, School Committee

It was the perfect Election Day — warm and sunny, with a steady stream of residents going into Winchester High School to cast their ballots. Preliminary results for the March 22 townwide election show 17.2 % of residents voted on Saturday. That's 2,933 votes cast, out of the town'

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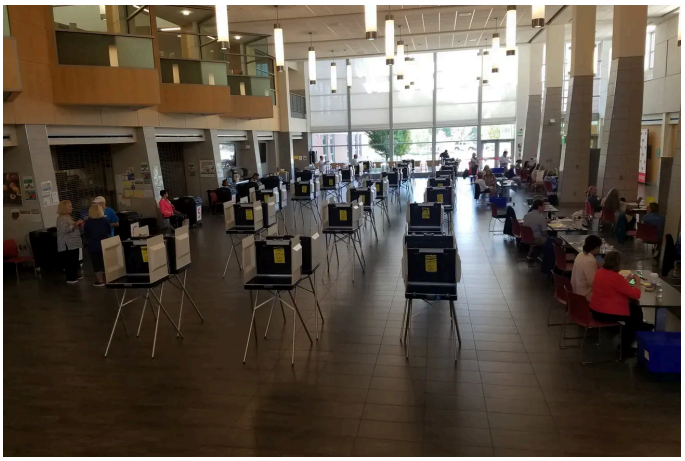
March 22, 2025



NEWS

Winchester Planning Board write-ins emerge ahead of Saturday election

Winchester voters head to the polls Saturday for municipal elections featuring contested races for Select Board and School Committee alongside an unexpected development — two write-in candidates vying for a Planning Board seat that initially have no contenders on the ballot. The March 22 election will take place at Winchester High

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 21, 2025

NEWS

Philip Frattaroli to be Winchester's 12th town moderator since 1915

It's a foregone conclusion. Philip Frattaroli will be Winchester's next town moderator. Sure, the townwide election is just days away, but Frattaroli is running unopposed for the seat being vacated by Heather von Mering, who has been in the role since March 2020. "I decided to take it

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March 20, 2025

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Latest

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: Y Welcome Here'

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By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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